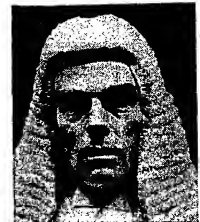


THE word "drama" has so often been applied to the happenings and proceedings of the Old Bailey that it is accepted almost without thought. Certainly it has a close affinity to the theatre except that the tragedy is real and not born merely of imagination.

Yes I felt on Thursday when I went to the Old Bailey that the whole thing is much more like a rehearsal or even a discussion about the play. As the hour approaches for the proceedings to begin, officials and reporters stroll in, some in special costume and others in plain clothes. Above the chest of the Judge is the sheathed Sword of Justice, the lights



Mr. Justice Devlin.

come on as if to test them for the play, a youthful Portia in wig and gown takes her seat and seems more feminine than any of her sisters in ordinary garments.

The Jury, ten men and two women, take their place in that odd position which makes it virtually impossible to see the face of the witness in the box. Indeed the back row of the jury are lucky if they ever see anything of the witness but the back of the head.

Silence in Court

Now there is a quickening movement. The supporting cast must all be present before the Judge appears. In the meantime the accused is in the dock with two bare-headed policemen sitting comfortably behind him. For no reason I found myself wondering when I last saw a policeman without his helmet.

Silence in the court! We all stand while the berobed and bewigged Mr. Justice Devlin takes his place. One wonders why a Judge's wig is so low that it reduces the judicial forehead to a mere inch. Strangely enough, even when the Judge is in his chair the theatre atmosphere persists. One almost expects to hear him say, "We shall now run through act three, scene one."

However, it is not long before

reality has us in its grip. There before us is a doctor charged with murder, yet he looks more like a self-made business man than a physician. His forehead is strong with heavy red veins above his eyebrows, his face is large, his mouth is inclined to be heavy.

How tired the little nurse must have been after the endless questioning in the witness box! My feet were almost aching in sympathy when she walked into the glittering sunshine of London in springtime, free to go where I wished.

Too Handsome?

THERE could be no more welcome visitor to London than Colonel George Drew, who recently had to give up the leadership of the Federal Conservative Party of Canada on grounds of health. He was a gallant soldier in the 1914 war, just as he was a gallant fighter in the battle of Canadian politics.

For many years he was the Conservative Premier of the Ontario Provincial Parliament, and could have remained so until he chose to retire. But he was "drafted" to the leadership of the party in the House of Commons at Ottawa and took on the heavy task of trying to defeat the Liberal Government, which had acquired something like "quaggers' rights." In fact, they have been in power since 1935.

Colonel Drew was so handsome a figure that he was nicknamed "Gorgeous George," which may or may not have been an asset. The Canadians take their politics seriously and are inclined to be suspicious of a political leader who does not look overburdened with care.

Basic Englishman

THE obituaries of C. K. Ogden, the founder of Basic English, whose death was announced yesterday, seemed to me to do less than justice to the extraordinary range of his interests. His house in Gordon Square was worthy of a book, crammed as it was with collections of treasures whose value and fascination were matched by the careless untidiness with which they were scattered about.

One might pick up a dusty folio from a pile on the floor and be told it was Dr. Johnson's own copy of his Dictionary. Or a little oil painting propped up on the mantelpiece would prove to be a hitherto unknown contemporary portrait—very

probably—of William Shakespeare. Elizabethan literature was the heart of Ogden's collecting, for in it he found un-failing food for his love of words. But at Gordon Square he had also, among other things, a unique collection of clocks of every shape and sort.

Night into Day

He once asked me to guess how a clock worked which apparently consisted only of a pair of hands set in a transparent rectangle of glass with no sign whatever of mechanism. I was completely baffled, but was comforted to know that a number of eminent scientists had equally failed to find the secret, which

Ogden declined to disclose. Of all men I know, he came closest to literally turning night into day. Dinner in the evening—at which, hospitable and convivial as he always was, he loved to share a bottle of wine with a friend at the Athenaeum or the Reform—was his breakfast. What other meals he ate I do not know, but I imagine he dined off breakfast before going to bed at the end of a long night's work.

M.P.'s Relaxing

FROM far-off Canterbury in New Zealand comes a query from a SUNDAY TIMES reader as to whether it is "The Smoke Room" or "The Smoking Room" which plays such a part in the life of British Parlia-

mentarians. The correct answer is "The Smoking Room."

Actually before the fire in 1834 there was a Smoking Room which was the only place available for Members who wanted to soothe their nerves with the consoling weed. Today the Members can smoke anywhere except in the Debating Chamber and a small section of the Writing Room and Library.

The present Smoking Room was one of the committee forums before the fire of 1834, and it was rebuilt in two sections. One is for good conversation and refreshment, while the other permits the game of chess to be played—the only game allowed.

Lord Macaulay (before he

received his peerage) wrote in 1832 from the Smoking Room in the House of Commons to his sister:

"I am writing here at 11 o'clock at night in the faintest of all fiftieth atmospheres in the vilest of vile company and with the smell of tobacco in my nostrils."

Perhaps it was just as well that he went to the other place.

Honour the Foe

THE Royal Netherlands Embassy has courteously reminded me that today marks the 350th anniversary of the birth of Michiel Adriaenszoon de Ruyter, who became the greatest admiral in the history of Holland. There will be nation-wide celebrations of the anniversary in the Netherlands.

If our enthusiasm does not quite reach the same pitch it must not be taken as any disparagement of such a mighty sailor and fighter. Rather it is caused by the reminder from the Embassy that among other achievements in battle are these items:

August 26, 1652. Wins battle with 30 ships before Plymouth against British Admiral Ayscue.

December 10, 1652. Admiral Blake is defeated.

June 11-14, 1665. Four days' battle against British Fleet, which is defeated.

1672. Third war against England.

August 21, 1673. Forces Anglo-French Fleet to withdraw completely.

March 18, 1677. State funeral of De Ruyter in the New Free Church at Amsterdam.

As a set-going race we salute the people of Holland while they celebrate the anniversary of their gallant admiral, but they will not be hurt if our admiration is greater than our enthusiasm.

A Young Musician

IT is always interesting to see a young man establishing a high position for himself in the arts. Such a one is Eric Heldsleck, the pianist, who recently played so brilliantly at the Wigmore Hall and who is hoping to invade New York.

Eric Heldsleck is an intellectual rather than a voluptuary. Not for him the lovely sorrows of Chopin. He worships at the shrine of Beethoven but also embraces the semi-modernists whose appeal is to the mind rather than to the emotions.

His father, who came over from Rheims for the London recital, is at once proud and a

little sad. In the champagne industry the Heldslecks are one of the royal families, yet here is a son who forsakes the vineyard for the concert-hall.

An Unwise Wager

MY recent comments on golf have brought a very interesting letter which not only tells a fascinating story but raises a matter of importance to every golfer. The story concerns Tommy Armour, who at



An early picture of Tommy Armour.

the time was secretary to a rich American golf club.

On one occasion after Armour had won some side bets he expressed the opinion that a moderate player should ever make a big bet with a first-class player, because the latter could always produce the required strokes when the challenge came.

This so incensed one of the amateurs that he said that no player in the world could give him a stroke a hole.

"I'll do just that," said

Armour, "and I'll use only one club." And so the wager was on.

The club he selected was a putting cleek. With this weapon he succeeded in getting a drive of 200 yards, and his placing was so accurate that he was never near a bunker. At the short holes, with the aid of a high tee, he produced an amazing pitch shot and actually went out in one under par.

The match finished at the 10th hole.

People & Words

"When you mention statistics these days, people always think you mean a set of three figures to describe one figure!"

—THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH.

"The 11-plus examination is an invention of the devil. I am astonished at a civilisation which can put such a strain on its children."

—THE REV. ARTHUR MORTON, Director of the N.S.P.C.C.

"Too many young people nowadays regard security as their inalienable right."

—SIR MILES THOMAS.

"Human beings are very curious and I am convinced that the glass connected with capital punishment is one of the factors which lead to a continuance of murder."

—LORD PERCIVAL LAWRENCE.

"I hope the Army can give me some happy obscurity at last."

—DR. ROGER BANNISTER.

"If it rains over the week-end, I get a mail on Monday like nobody's business. People cannot go out into the garden to dig so they write to their M.P. telling him what they think of the Government."

—MR. MAURICE ORMEAU, M.P. (Lab., Willenden East).